

97-84174-1

Gary, Elbert Henry

Address by Elbert H. Gary,
...May 28, 1920

[New York]

[1920]

97-84174-1

MASTER NEGATIVE #

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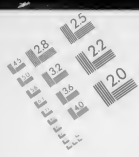
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1 040 DEH c DEH d OCL
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4 100 1 Gary, Elbert H. q (Elbert Henry). d 1846-1927.
5 245 10 Address by Elbert H. Gary, president. American Iron and Steel
Institute : b at annual meeting . . . New York City, May 28, 1920.
6 260 [S.l. : b s.n., c 1920]
7 300 13 p. : c 20 cm.
8 710 2 American Iron and Steel Institute.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

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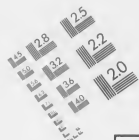
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Gift of the President

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Box 83

Address by

Elbert H. Gary

President, American Iron and Steel Institute

At Annual Meeting

New York

May 28, 1920

ADDRESS BY

ELBERT H. GARY

PRESIDENT, AMERICAN IRON & STEEL INSTITUTE

AT ANNUAL MEETING, HOTEL COMMODORE, NEW YORK CITY

MAY 28, 1920

THE SHIP OF STATE.

In this presence it may be asserted, without thought of contradiction, our country is the best of all.

As frequently stated, notwithstanding the United States has only 6% of the world's population and 7% of the world's land, yet we produce:

20 per cent. of the world's supply of gold.
25 per cent. of the world's supply of wheat.
40 per cent. of the world's supply of iron and steel.
40 per cent. of the world's supply of lead.
40 per cent. of the world's supply of silver.
50 per cent. of the world's supply of zinc.
52 per cent. of the world's supply of coal.
60 per cent. of the world's supply of aluminum.
60 per cent. of the world's supply of copper.
60 per cent. of the world's supply of cotton.
66 per cent. of the world's supply of oil.
75 per cent. of the world's supply of corn.
85 per cent. of the world's supply of automobiles.

Better still, we have constitutional freedom; protection of life, liberty and property. If, in any respect, these principles are violated, it is by individuals and not by sanction of fundamental laws. As one becomes familiar with the Constitution and with all departments created by it, one is convinced that the scheme and philosophy of the framers was to guarantee equal protection and opportunity to all the people. With the preservation and functioning of the Government in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution there is offered peace and protection; with disregard or violation of any material part of it there is, *pro tanto*, suffering, distress and ruin.

Possessed of these natural resources and opportunities a moral, intelligent and industrious people have reached the first place in worthy achievement. Hence, persons from every part of the world have come to the United States to better their condition by participating in the blessings which are here provided. For no other reason, except an intention to wantonly attack, destroy and forcibly appropriate, would foreigners settle in our midst.

The great majority of immigrants have come with pure motives. They have been welcomed by their predecessors and eagerly and gladly have become a part of the mass of loyal and deserving citizens. We have approximately one hundred and ten millions of inhabitants, and, as a whole, they rank high in the world's throngs of human beings.

However, we need not close our eyes and ears to the utterances of learned men in editorials, lectures, public

addresses and private speech, to the effect that even our Government itself is threatened at the present time; that for some months there has been and still is being carried on propaganda, instigated and controlled by vicious men, mostly foreigners, which tends to create a feeling of unrest, dissatisfaction and antagonisms. Appeal is made to the cupidity, the selfishness and the baser instincts of men. Promises not possible of fulfillment are made; sometimes threats and intimidations are indulged in.

Human nature, weak and greedy, is easily affected. The minds of considerable numbers, due to war conditions, resulting in privation, suffering and misery in some cases and temporary possession of unusual funds in others, are abnormal, and false and wicked doctrines are apt to find lodgment. Advantage has been taken of these natural tendencies by unprincipled men, some of them really enemies of the United States, others merely demagogues, all actuated by the desire to promote personal gain. Numbers of men who are loyal Americans, some giving evil advice and others lending receptive ears, will hereafter entertain feelings of regret and shame for their part in the public discussions of today.

The present so-called labor strikes, involving riot and injury to property and person, are instigated as a part of the campaign to disturb and demoralize the social and economic conditions of the country. In other lands very serious results have been accomplished by the same means which have been employed here.

Is the disease of unjustified unrest and revolt now discernible progressive? Will large numbers of our pop-

ulation be influenced? Is the Ship of State in danger? Is she headed for the rocks? Is there a possibility of increasing storms to a degree which would drive her to destruction?

The answers depend upon the conduct and efforts of the sailors themselves, and they include all classes of people. The word "class" is not used in an invidious sense. There are no classes in the United States such as have existed in other countries. Formerly, in certain parts of the world, classes were actually formed and sustained by the rich or powerful, who were supposed to belong to the "upper class". They became distinct and commanding. They secured and continued to hold additional privileges and benefits to which they were not justly entitled, and which made them proud and overbearing. They were doomed to eventual failure and final destruction, except so far as they might be deserving on the merits. In America those who now seek to establish classes and to secure discriminating favors for themselves are not prominent because of wealth; they are composed of a comparatively small minority of the population who have adopted the word "labor", which signifies honorable activity, with the concealed design of forming a "class" which they hope will finally attract a majority of the people, and thus enable them to obtain one legislative act after another until the Constitution shall be undermined and the whole structure destroyed.

These men have already secured certain legislation which is wrongfully discriminating. Some of them know what the final consequence of their designs must be; that

all would be lost in the ruins; but immediate personal gain is to them sufficient justification.

The safe, efficacious and natural remedy for the perils which have been hinted at are to be found only in unity of purpose and effort on the part of the whole crew on board our Ship of State, which includes everyone who is blessed with the privileges of citizenship in the United States; an undivided loyalty to the principles of our Constitution and all the laws which are passed in conformity to it. This will eliminate from the social structure the vicious elements. Sad to say, there is not at present, nor has been in the past, perfect harmony of action between the masses of the people.

Without dispute, any person has his or her place, rights and privileges. This includes those which are personal, private and exclusive. No one may properly impinge upon the rights of another. Everyone must be protected to the full limit of the laws which are intended for the benefit of all, with the understanding that private interests are subordinated to the public welfare; but in the exercise of individual rights, in the protection of individual property and interests, it is the obligation, as it should be the pleasure, of everyone to act without animosity toward the Constitution, the laws, and the general public, and without improper and unnecessary friction.

In a discussion of this kind there should be a frank admission that no one is without fault; that every variety of human nature may justly be censured. And for purposes of illustration, we may refer to groups of persons and interests. We could not accurately speak of them as

classes; but these groups might be, and heretofore have been, mentioned as the capitalistic group (including their representatives), the labor group, and the general public. Slight effort at analysis will demonstrate how far short of accuracy these descriptions are.

Who compose the first? Those who have accumulated property; if so, how much?

Who make up the second? Those who work with their hands; if so, with the shovel, the lever of a machine or the pen?

Who constitute the third? Those who neither possess pecuniary resources nor perform any labor? If so, there is none to be considered in this connection, for the group would be small in numbers and subjects of charity or public control. Obviously, the public is made up of the entire population.

And yet, we can comprehend to some extent what is in the minds of some of the writers and speakers who undertake to make these classifications to which I have alluded.

EMPLOYERS.

I will, for present purposes, place the members of this large audience in the first group. Most of you are possessed of accumulated savings and occupy important positions, although you started from the lowest rung of the ladder of success, and because of merit and hard work have reached your present station in life. You have, in management, in greater or less degree, marked responsibilities in regard to each and all of the groups described.

You could not shirk nor minimize them if you desired to do so. As a business citizen you must account to others for your stewardship. What you say, what you do, will have an important influence in national, even international affairs. It will be good or bad. You must consistently observe the principles of the Constitution, the provisions of the laws of the land, the rights and interests of your neighbors, including your employes, customers, competitors and the general public. You must be unselfish, reasonable, fair, sincere and honest. You should, without interruption, give evidence of a disposition to conciliate and cooperate. Regardless of the past, even though you may believe you have been unjustly treated or censured, you should and will make and keep resolutions for the future which you know are proper. All this, of course, applies with full force to your President.

If we adhere firmly to these principles, if we are steadfast and true; and then courageously, though modestly, proclaim our rights and insist upon proper consideration in return it will be accorded. We have heretofore been somewhat backward in this respect.

EMPLOYES.

Employes generally are included in the second group. With all others they have full and equal rights and responsibilities. They must and will realize that their advancement and contentment depend upon the progress and prosperity of the employers; that, except for the willing and free investment of capital up to the requirements

of business demands, together with full co-operative assistance on the part of the best talent, enterprise and initiative would languish and disappear and that indifference and idleness would be substituted.

Agitators who are trying to create trouble between employes and their employers as a rule are insincere and selfish. Generally, they, themselves, have performed no hard labor, nor had experience which qualifies them to lead or instruct. They strive for personal popularity and gain. Their business is better, their compensation increased, when others are in trouble. Assuming to be sympathetic and superior in intelligence, they mislead and often misrepresent. They promise reforms, but their methods lead to trouble and loss to others. In this list are included a few writers, lecturers, public speakers and self-appointed labor leaders, so called.

The great masses of employes, if left to decide for themselves, are loyal to the country, to the public interest and to their employers; and to the extent of this loyalty they will be rewarded up to the full measure of their deserts. This they will have the right to demand; and it will be readily and cheerfully accorded. They also should, and they will, continuously exercise a disposition to conciliate and co-operate. As applied to all groups, faithful performance, and this only, will insure highest pecuniary results and most liberal treatment.

We sometimes hear a man claim that the world, or the nation or the public owes him a living. This is foolish and preposterous. There is due every citizen of this country no more and no less than the same opportunity

to procure a living that is accorded any other. This is the standard of fairness and justice. The state cannot furnish to the individual natural ability or disposition. The man who is honest, who reads, studies, thinks, works, economizes, saves, persists and uses his best judgment will succeed in this country. If he is neglectful, indolent, profligate and dishonest, he will fail. A large majority of the men of the United States who have become prominent in statesmanship, finance, professional or business life, started from an humble beginning; and, by their own endeavor, have advanced. Ordinarily the men who complain because of their poverty or position in life have only themselves to blame. There are exceptions, such as those who are naturally or otherwise disabled at birth or later, and they are entitled to and do receive public assistance; but, as a rule, those who do not prosper are indifferent to worthy accomplishment, or partly so. In every department of life in this country, in the mill, the shop, the store, the bank, the office, the profession, the schools, one may, so far as opportunity is concerned, start at the bottom, and, by his own energy and faithfulness, progress even to the top. We who are present on this occasion know by experience this is true. Any concern, any organization, any government which seeks to promote, demote, or retain a man in position contrary to his just deserts, combats the public interest, the life and growth of the nation; and more than this, is perpetrating an incalculable injury to the man himself.

THE PUBLIC.

In the classification suggested, the public comprehends every citizen except the individual who is discussing the subject. Speaking of men we can define interest only as either public or private. Depending upon the question under consideration, we may embrace in the word "public" a community, a village, city, county, commonwealth or nation; but the question comes back to either public or private interest.

As each individual in the groups heretofore mentioned is obligated to conduct himself or herself in such manner as to promote and not impair the public welfare, so the public is likewise responsible to the individual. In public discussions, and occasionally in newspaper editorials, it is frequently assumed that there is no corresponding and reciprocal duty on the part of the general public whom, at the particular time, the speaker or writer attempts to represent. Unjust attacks or criticisms against individual interests, sometimes promiscuous, in other instances by name, are made from a biased standpoint or upon distortion of the facts. The exact truth is not infrequently ignored or overlooked. Many able discourses in the press, in the Congress of the United States, by public officials, even from the pulpit, are based on a misstatement of the facts. Those possessed of least ability from experience or otherwise are most pronounced in abuse or misrepresentation. It sometimes seems apparent that persons indulging in harsh criticisms purposely avoid ascertaining the truth which is easily obtainable. A pro-

posed assertion that might seem to be effective in popularizing the speaker or influencing the poorly advised, would be withheld if previous inquiry were made as to the truth.

The speakers or writers who are recklessly unjust are rare exceptions. But for this reason, if for no other, they perhaps receive more extended notice. And they are a part of the general public and from that viewpoint claim to prepare and deliver their dissertations.

The volunteer guardians of the public welfare and of private individuals and interests are numerous and audacious. They wrap about themselves the cloak of self-righteousness and proclaim from the housetops. The public has a duty to perform in exposing and controverting hypocrisy and sham on the part of the reckless and irresponsible. In its own interest it is bound to protect private property, private business and capital, and of course, most of all, them that are least capable of caring for themselves.

Every individual should under all circumstances receive from all others honest and fair consideration. There should not be, there must not be, any discrimination against or in favor of any particular group of persons if this country is to retain the position among the nations to which it is justly entitled.

The general public, whether it is represented by governmental heads, by Congress or otherwise, should co-operate with and assist private enterprise. Every department of government has responsibilities and opportunities of magnitude at this particular period in our

history, remembering that general prosperity is the first essential. They can do much toward the preservation or destruction of the Ship of State. They can by precept and example contribute in rehabilitating and re-establishing the affairs of this country. For constructive statesmanship, which will add to stability and progress in the moral, economic, social and political life of the nation, they will be entitled to the commendation of all mankind; while by a narrow-minded, partisan, fault-finding, destructive policy, they will create discord, distress and demoralization. The majority of the people of this country are tired of petty animosities, of unreasonable rewards or punishments, of undue restrictions or liberality concerning public or private undertakings. They are disgusted with muckraking, which usually is conducted for the glorification of the inquisitor and at a large expense to the public. This is especially true of the present, when sentiment is inflamed and when the burdens of taxation are almost intolerable.

A word concerning the next President—the Captain of the Ship of State. There must be selected one who is able, wise and well-informed, of unquestioned honesty, morally and intellectually, eminently fair and impartial, frank and sincere, broad-minded, deeply sympathetic, courageous, sturdy and well balanced; and above everything else, loyal to the Constitution and the laws of the land.

Other problems of magnitude, national and international, engage our attention at the present time, but

those of highest importance relate to the life and safety of our Ship of State.

CONCLUSION.

We have reason to expect, and I firmly believe, that now and henceforth, more than ever before in our history, a spirit of unity will pervade and control the minds of all the citizens from the President down; that each one will recognize a personal responsibility to his country and to all its inhabitants; that strictest economy in expenditures and management, lowest costs, and proper compensation for faithful performance will be the universal sentiment; and that order, stability, advancement and prosperity will surely follow.

* * * "Sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'T is of the wave and not the rock;
'T is but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!"

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